

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 338 760

UD 028 384

AUTHOR Negroni, Peter J.
TITLE The Urgency for Change: School Reform and Quality Education for Hispanic Youth. Publication No. 90-03.
INSTITUTION Massachusetts Univ., Boston. Mauricio Gaston Inst. for Latino Community Development and Public Policy.
PUB DATE Oct 90
NOTE 20p.
AVAILABLE FROM Mauricio Gaston Institute, University of Massachusetts-Boston, Healey Library, 10th Floor, Dorchester, MA 02125 (\$12.00).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)
EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Affirmative Action; Cooperative Programs; *Disadvantaged Youth; Early Intervention; *Educational Change; Educational Quality; Elementary Secondary Education; Equal Education; *Hispanic Americans; Institutional Evaluation; Parent Participation; Public Schools; *State Legislation; Teaching Methods; Thinking Skills; Urban Schools; *Urban Youth
IDENTIFIERS Latinos; *Massachusetts

ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the successful initiatives and unforeseen problems that have arisen in Massachusetts public education since the passage of the Public School Improvement Act of 1985, with a focus on the needs of Hispanic Americans. There is overwhelming evidence that the specific needs of Hispanic Americans are neither being identified nor met by the three major reform initiatives that have been introduced in the areas of state-parental choice, privatization of schools, and site-based governance. In view of the estimated future need for skilled workers, the business community has begun to spend resources on basic skills education and advanced training for employees or to form alliances with schools. The paper suggests the following planning efforts to address Latino needs: (1) early intervention programs; (2) parent training and involvement; (3) linkages with colleges and universities; (4) personalized and cooperative learning and peer tutoring; (5) involvement of community and human service agencies; (6) state regulations requiring school improvement plans and data profiles; (7) planning for mastery of higher-order thinking skills; (8) recognition that school effectiveness can be measured in ways beyond standardized tests; (9) incorporation of research findings on tracking, ability grouping, retention, suspension, and bilingual education; (10) implementation of a state-supported affirmative action program that attracts Hispanic professionals; (11) equal funding access to education; (12) creation of a statewide Hispanic Advisory Council; and (13) support for programs that work. This document contains 55 references. (JB)

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